



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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National Park Service News Release

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National Parks Honored for Conservation Partnerships

Washington – Two National Park Service partnerships were recently recognized with the Partnership in Conservation Award from the Department of the Interior. Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site and Na Papa Kanaka o Pu'ukohola Heiau, a group devoted to perpetuating traditional Hawaiian customs, were honored for restoration work on a sacred temple. The National Capital Region and the Latin American Youth Center were acknowledged for developing 2nd Nature, a program that connects Washington, DC youth to parks through art, music, and media.

"The benefits stemming from both of these partnerships are endless," said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. "These projects have strengthened bonds between members of the local communities and the parks, connected others to park resources, improved the visitor experience, and made a lasting impact on the parks."

In 2006, an earthquake damaged Pu'ukohola Heiau and Mailekini Heiau. Pu'ukohola Heiau National Historic Site had to decide whether to restore its namesake Native Hawaiian landmark and visitor attraction using modern or traditional repair methods. The partnership with Na Papa Kanaka o Pu'ukohola Heiau permitted the park to restore the Heiau using traditional Native masonry and hand labor. This decision resulted in a cost savings of \$3 million on the project and provided the opportunity to teach the skill of Hawaiian dry stone setting to the next generation. More than 600 volunteers, mostly partner group members, turned out to help at 20 scheduled workshops over a four-year period. These volunteers placed their mana (spiritual power) as well as physical effort into the project and gained a sense of pride and ownership. The experience elevated the level of relevance of the Heiau to the volunteers, their families, and park visitors. The project is a model for the engagement of native people in the stewardship of their sacred sites.

The National Capital Region and the Latin American Youth Center were honored for their work on an innovative urban youth outreach and community engagement program entitled 2nd Nature: Inspiring Creativity through the Natural Environment. National Park Service staff formed a partnership with the Latin American Youth Center's Art + Media House, a non-profit arts education group that teaches visual and auditory arts to youth in the DC area. The 40 youth in program spent seven weeks learning skills in different art tracks such as mural art, digital storytelling, poetry, music, and radio production. They also went on ranger-led visits to parks, including two overnight camping trips. The outings introduced the group to the natural world and provided a catalyst for creativity and self discovery. The students produced art, music, and media that reflected their park experiences and exhibited their work within the community. The 2nd Nature program showcases the power of art and helps national parks better connect and engage with urban teens.

The Partners in Conservation Award is a Department of the Interior honor established to recognize collaborative achievement in the conservation and restoration of land, environmental issues, and/or

natural resource challenges. This year, 17 alliances were acknowledged for achieving conservation results through community engagement and local partnerships.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 395 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.